

27

Arden of Feversham.

AN HISTORICAL
TRAGEDY:

TAKEN FROM
HOLINGSHEAD'S CHRONICLE,
In the Reign of King EDWARD VI.

ACTED AT THE
THEATRE-ROYAL, in DRURY-LANE.

By the late Mr. LILLO.



LONDON,
Printed for T. DAVIES, at *Shakespear's Head*, in
Russell-Street, Covent-Garden. 1762.

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AN HISTORICAL

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PROLOGUE,

By a FRIEND.

Spoken by Mr. HAVARD.

THE piece is Lillo's—He, long since in dust :
Criticks far hence ; or spare his urn's sad trust,
Kind to his Muse, and to his memory just ;

His Muse resembles him, and knows no art ;
She speaks not to the head, but to the heart.
The artless maid, by no false seal impress'd,
Bears but an honest copy of his breast :
And ev'ry eye has own'd, his natural lay,
Sprung from the heart, wings to the heart it's way.

The Tragic Bard apes not the Epick fire,
On Fancy's wing still aiming to aspire :
In Nature's palace, simple, great, and plain,
Inrich'd and crowded ornament were vain :
Embellishment does but distract the mind,
Which Art should never to minuteness bind.
Tho' honey'd language she from Hybla steal,
Your ears applaud—your hearts no ardours feel.
With labour'd art tho' the sad tale be told,
The melting tear, mean while congeal'd, grows cold.
When Passion speaks immediate to the soul,
Parts she o'erlooks, to grasp at once the whole.

To night, your Bard, from your own annals shews,
A dreadful story of domestic woes :

From facts he draws (his picture's from the life)
The injur'd husband, and the faithless wife,
Doom'd all the train of besom pangs to prove,
Pangs, which must always wait on lawless love.

Ye generous who feel for other's woe,
Ye fair, whose tears for injur'd virtue flow,
In justice to yourselves, applaud his plan,
And judge the poet, as ye lov'd the man.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

M E N.

The mayor of <i>Feversham</i> .	Mr. <i>Burton</i> .
<i>Arden</i> , a gentleman of <i>Feversham</i> .	Mr. <i>Havard</i> .
<i>Franklin</i> his friend.	Mr. <i>Scrase</i> .
<i>Michael</i> , <i>Arden</i> 's servant.	Mr. <i>Wignell</i> .
<i>Green</i> .	Mr. <i>Packer</i> .
<i>Mosby</i> .	Mr. <i>Bransby</i> .
<i>Bradshaw</i> .	Mr. <i>Johnston</i> .
<i>Black Will</i> ,	Mr. <i>Phillips</i> .
<i>George Shakebag</i> ,	Mr. <i>Vaughan</i> .
Lord <i>Cheyney</i> .	
<i>Adam Fowl</i> , an inn-keeper.	
Officers, &c.	
A servant to <i>Arden</i> .	

W O M E N.

<i>Alicia</i> , wife to <i>Arden</i> .—A young gentlewoman.	
<i>Maria</i> , sister to <i>Mosby</i> .	Miss <i>Barton</i> .

S C E N E, *Feversham*, in *Kent*.

ARDEN of FEVERSHAM.

ACT I. SCENE I.

The street before Arden's door.

Mosby alone.

THE morning's dark, and horrid, as my purpose.—

Thrice have my snares been laid for *Arden's* life,

And thrice hath he escap'd.—I am not safe :

The living may revenge.—Oh ! cou'd I win

Alicia to conspire her husband's fall,

Then might I say, security, thou'rt mine,

And laugh at all to come.—For other instruments,

There's *Green*: he bears him hard about this suit

For th'abbey-lands, to which the hot youth pleads

Some fancy'd right.—*Michaël*, the trencher-fav'rite;

A bastard, bred of *Arden's* charity :

He has been privy to our secret joys,

And, on that trust presuming, loves my sister—

Winks at adultery, and may at murder.

Maria is his price. I've plac'd her here,

Companion of my sweet *Alicia's* hours,

To spread her charms for ever in his eye :

To her are all my visits. But *Alicia*—

She must, she shall comply : when to my arms

Her honour she resign'd, her fond reluctance
whisper'd,

6 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

She cou'd deny me nothing.—This to try.

[Exit into Arden's house.]

SCENE II. A chamber.

Arden in his night-gown.

Unhappy *Arden*, whither canst thou wander
To lay thy heavy load of sorrows down!
Will change of place relieve th'afflicted mind,
Or does all nature yield a balm to cure
The pangs of slighted love and broken faith?
Ungrateful false *Alicia*! false with *Mosby*,
The vile dependent of my foe profess'd,
Lord *Clifford*'s full-fed flatt'rer!—O damn'd!—
Come, *Franklin*, come: *Arden*, thy friend invites thee;
And let me pour my griefs into thy bosom,
And find in friendship what I've lost in love.

Enter *Alicia*.

Alic. Why, *Arden*, do you leave your bed thus
early?

Have cold and darkness greater charms than I?
There was a time when winter-nights were short,
And *Arden* chid the morn that call'd him from me.

Ard. This deep dissembling, this hypocrisy,
(The last worst state of a degen'rate mind)
Speaks her in vice determin'd and mature. [Aside.]

Alic. What maid, that knows man's variable
nature,

Wou'd sell her free estate for marriage bonds?
From vows and oaths, and every servile tye,
The tyrant man at pleasure is set free;
The holy nuptial bond leaves him at large;
Yet vests him with a power that makes us slaves.
'Tis heav'nly this—

Ard. To stop my just reproach
Art thou the first to tax the marriage state?

Alic. Are you not jealous? do you not give ear

To vain surmises and malicious tongues,
That hourly wound my yet untainted fame?

Arden. And wou'dst thou make me author of the
shame

Thy guilt has brought on us!—I'll bear no longer.
The traitor *Mosby*, curs'd, detested *Mosby*,
Shall render an account for both your crimes.

Alic. What do I hear! [*Aside.*

Arden. That base mechanic slave
Shall answer with his blood.

Alic. O hear me speak.

Arden. No, I am deaf: As thou hast ever been
To fame, to virtue, and my just complaints.

Alic. Thus on my knees.

Arden. Adult'res! dost thou kneel
And weep, and pray, and bend thy stubborn heart
(Stubborn to me) to sue for him?—Away,
Away this instant, lest I kill thee too.

[*Recovering himself.*]

No—Not the hell thou'st kindled in this bosom
Shall make me shed thy blood.

Alic. I do not hope it.

Arden. For me, be as immortal as thy shame.

Alic. I see your cruel purpose: I must live,
To see your hand and honour stain'd with blood.
Your ample fortune seiz'd on by the state,
Your life a forfeit to the cruel laws.

O *Arden*, blend compassion with your rage,
And kindly kill me first.

Arden. Not for my sake

Are all thy tears (then had you felt them sooner,)
Plead not the ruin you have made; but say
Why have you driven me to these extremes?
Why sacrific'd my peace, and your own fame,
By corresponding with a menial slave?

Alic. Thou canst not think, that I have wrong'd
thy bed?

Arden.

8 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

Ard. Wou'd I cou'd not!

Alic. By heav'n!—

Ard. No perjuries.

But now, as you lay slumb'ring by my side,
I still awake, anxious and full of thought,
(For thou hast banish'd sleep from these sad eyes)
With gentle accents thrilling with desire,
You call'd on *Mosby*, love made me doubt my ears,
And question if the dark and silent night
Conspir'd not with my fancy to deceive me:
But soon I lost the painful pleasing hope;
Again you call'd upon your minion *Mosby*.
Confirm'd, I strove to fly your tainted bed,
But, wanting strength, sunk lifeless on my pillow.
You threw your eager arms about my neck,
You press'd my bloodless cheeks with your warm
lips,

Which glow'd adult'refs, with infernal heat;
And call'd a third time on the villain *Mosby*.

Alic. A dream indeed, if I e'er call'd on him.

Ard. Thy guilty dreams betray thy waking
thoughts.

Alic. I know I'm simple, thoughtless, and un-
guarded;

And what is carelessness, you construe guilt.
Yet were I weak as those fantastic visions,
Sure I cou'd never have condemn'd you, *Arden*,
On circumstances and an idle dream.

Ard. But such a dream.—

Alic. Yet was it but a dream,

Which, tho' I not remember, I abhor;
And mourn with tears, because it gives you pain.

Arden, you do not wish me innocent,
Or on suspicions cou'd you doom me guilty!

Ard. Not wish thee innocent! do sinking ma-
riners,

When

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM. 9

When struggling with the raging seas for life,
With the assistance of some friendly plank?

'Tis that, and that alone, can bring me comfort.

Alic. O jealousy! thou fierce remorseless fiend,
Degen'rate, most unnatural child of love;

How shall I chace thee from my *Arden's* bosom?

Ard. There is a way, an easy way, *Alicia*.—

Alic. O name it—speak.

Ard. What's past may be forgotten.
Your future conduct.—

Alic. You distract me, *Arden*.

Say, how shall I convince you of my truth?

Ard. I ask but this: never see *Mosby* more.

[*He starts.*]

By heav'n, she's dumb!

Alic. O how shall I conceal

My own confusion, and elude his rage? [*Aside.*]

Ard. Thou'rt lost, *Alicia*!—lost to me—and
heav'n.

Alic. Indeed I'm lost, if you unkindly doubt me.

Ard. Wilt thou then ne'er converse with *Mosby*
more?

Alic. If e'er I do, may heav'n, and you, forsake
me!

Ard. You'll keep your word, *Alicia*!—Prithee,
say—

Alic. You'll break my heart.

Ard. I'd rather break my own.

Then thou art innocent, and lov'st me still.

Alic. And ever will.

Ard. Give me thy hand—thy heart,

O give me that!

Alic. That always was your own.

Ard. Thou flatterer—then whence this cruel
strife?

'Still art thou cold: nor warm are thy embraces,

Nor

10 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

Nor sparkle in thine eyes the fires of love :
Cold, cold, and comfortless.

Alic. Indeed you fright me.

Ard. 'Tis possible.

Alic. What ?

Ard. That thou may'st yet deceive me.

Alic. O ! I am wretched !

Ard. Both perhaps are so.

But if thou ever lov'dst, thou'lt not despise me,
And wilt forgive me, if indeed I've wrong'd thee,
As I've forgiven thee—Pity, I'm sure, I need.

[*Exit Arden.*]

Alic. Thou hast it, *Arden*, ev'n from her that
wrongs thee.

All, all shall pity thee, and curse *Alicia*.
Can I feel this, and further tempt the stream
Of guilty love ! O whither am I fallen !

Enter Maria.

Mar. An happy day, *Alicia*—and may each morn
Of coming life be usher'd with like joy.

Franklin, from court return'd, has brought the
grant

Of the abbey-lands confirm'd by the young king,
To *Arden* for his life : nor will deliver
But to himself the Deed.

Alic. A worthy friend !

The grant is not more welcome to my husband,
Than *Franklin*'s company.

Mar. He's flown to meet him.

Enter a servant.

Serv. Madam, your brother *Mosby*—

Alic. Where is *Mosby* ?

Serv. He waits below.—

Alic. O haste, and lead me to him.

Serv. Madam, he but desires to see his sister.

Alic. His sister ! what ! did he not ask for me ?

Mar.

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM. 11

Mar. Perhaps—

Alic. Pray, give me leave—looks he in health?

Serv. He seems in health—

Alic. Here, and not ask for me!

Seems he or angry then, or melancholy?—

Answer me, stock, stone.—

Serv. Truly, I can't say.

Alic. Thou canst say nothing—Get thee from my sight.

Yet stay—no matter. I'll myself go seek him.

[*Exeunt Alicia and servant.*]

Mar. Where reason is, can passion thus prevail!

[*Exit Maria.*]

SCENE III.

A parlour in Arden's house.

Enter Alicia meeting Mosby.

Alic. *Mosby*, that brow befits our wayward fate,
The evil hour, long fear'd, is fallen upon us,
And we shall sink beneath it. Do not frown—
If you're unkind, to whom shall I complain!

Mosby. Madam, it was my sister I expected—

Alic. Am I forgotten then! Ungrateful man!
This only cou'd have added to my woes.
Did you but know what I have borne for you,
You wou'd not thus, unmov'd, behold my tears.

Mosby. Madam, you make me vain.

Alic. Insult not, *Mosby*.

You were the first dear object of my love,
And cou'd my heart have made a second choice,
I had not been the object of your scorn:
But duty, gratitude, the love of fame,
And pride of virtue, were too weak t'erase
The deep impression of your early vows.

Mos. Therefore you kindly chose to wed another.

Alic. Reproach me not with what I deem'd my duty.

Oh!

12 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

Oh! had I thought I cou'd assume the name,
And never know the affection of a wife,
I wou'd have died ere giv'n my hand to *Arden*.

Mos. You gave him all. ———

Alic. No, no, I gave him nothing:
Words without truth—an hand without an heart.
But he has found the fraud—the slumb'ring lion
At length hath rous'd himself ———

Mos. ——— And I must fall
The victim ———

Alic. ——— No, he knows not yet his wrongs.

Mos. But quickly will.

Alic. That, that's my greatest fear.

Mos. Then, branded with a strumpet's hated
name,

The cause abhorr'd of shame, of blood, and ruin,
Thou'lt be expos'd and hooted thro' the world.

Alic. O hide the dreadful image from my view!
Chaste matrons, modest maids, and virtuous wives,
Scorning a weakness which they never knew,
Shall blush with indignation at my name.

Mos. My death—but that—tho' certain. ———

Alic. Labour not

To drive me to despair. Fain wou'd I hope—

Mos. You may—and be deceiv'd. For me I know
My fate resolv'd—and thee the instrument;
The willing instrument of *Mosby*'s ruin.
Inconstant, false *Alicia*!

Alic. False indeed,

But not to thee, cruel, injurious *Mosby*.

Mos. Injurious! false one! might not all these
dangers

That threaten to involve us both in ruin,
Ere this have been prevented?

Alic. Ha!—say on.

Mos. And not preventing, art not thou the cause?

Alic.

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM. 13

Alic. Ah! whither, *Mosby*—whither wou'dst thou drive me?

Mos. Nay, didst thou love, or wou'dst secure thy fame,

Preserve my life, and bind me yours for ever;

'Tis yet within your power.—

Alic. By *Arden's* death!

Mean'st thou not so? speak out, and be a devil.

Mos. Yes, 'tis for thee I am so.—But your looks Declare, my death wou'd please you better, Madam.

Alic. Exaggerating fiend! be dumb for ever.

His death! I must not cast a glance that way.

Mos. Is there another way?—O think, *Alicia*.

Alic. I will, for that will make me mad: And madness

Were some excuse. Come, kind distraction! come, And *Arden* dies—my husband dies for *Mosby*.

[*Scrieks, and runs to Mosby.*

Enter Arden and Franklin.

He's here! O save me! tell me, did he hear?

Ard. [Starting.] *Franklin*, support your friend. I shake with horror.

Frank. What moves you thus?

Ard. See—*Mosby*—with my wife!

Mos. But, Madam, I shall spare your farther trouble;

In happy time behold my neighbour here.

[*As taking leave of Alicia.*

Alic. Mischief and wild confusion have begun, And desolation waits to close the scene. [*Exit*

Alicia.

Mos. Sir, I wou'd gladly know, whether your grant

Of the rich abbey-lands of *Feversham*

Be yet confirm'd or not?

Ard. What if I tear

B

Her

14 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

Her faithless heart, ev'n in the traitor's sight,
Who taught it falshood. [Aside.]

Frank. He is lost in thought.
But I can answer that: It is confirm'd—
I brought the deed, with the great seal annex'd,
Sign'd by our pious *Edward*, and his council.

Mos. I'm satisfied.—

Ard. So am not I—By hell,
There's justice in the thought.—I'm strangely
tempted. [Aside.]

Mos. My friend seems wrapt in thought—I came
to advise him,

That *Green*, by virtue of a former grant
His father long enjoy'd—

Ard. For my estate
The law, and this good seal, is my security;
To them I leave *Green* and his groundless claim.
But my just right to false *Alicia's* heart,
(So dearly purchas'd with a husband's name,
And sacred honour of a gentleman)
I shall assert myself, and thus secure
From further violation. [Draws.]

Mos. Her known virtue
Renders the injury your fancy forms,
A thing of air.

Frank. Impossible to thought.
Whence, *Arden*, comes this sudden madness on
thee,

That your *Alicia*, ever dear esteem'd,
And deeply lov'd—

Ard. Out on the vile adult'res!
But thou demure, insinuating slave,
Shalt taste my vengeance first. Defend thyself.

Mos. I scorn to take advantage of your rage.

Ard. A coward too! O my consummate shame!

Mos. This I can bear from you.

Ard.

Ard. Or any man.

Why hangs that useless weapon by thy side,
Thou shame to manhood?—Draw.—Will nothing
move thee? [Strikes him.]

Frank. Hold. Whither wou'd your mad revenge
transport you?

Ard. Shall shameful cowardise protect a villain?

Mos. You chuse a proper place to shew your
courage!

Ard. Go on. I'll follow to the ocean's brink,
Or to the edge of some dread precipice,
Where terror and despair shall stop thy flight,
And force thy trembling hand to guard thy life.

Mos. What I endure to save a lady's honour!
[To Franklin.]

Frank. Your longer stay will but incense him
more;

Pray quit the house.

Mos. Sir, I shall take your counsel. [Exit Mosby.]

Ard. He hath escap'd me then—But for my wife—

Frank. What has she done?

Ard. Done! must I tell my shame?

Away, begone—lest from my prey withheld
I turn, and tear th'officious hand that lets me.
Soft! art thou *Franklin*? Pardon me, sweet
friend;—

My spirits fail—I shake—I must retire.

Frank. To your *Alicia*.

Ard. To my lonely couch;

For I must learn to live without her, *Franklin*.

Frank. Pray heaven forbid!

Ard. To hate her, to forget her—if I can:

No easy task for one who doats like me.
From what an height I'm fallen! Once smiling love
Of all its horrors robb'd the blackest night,
And gilt with gladness ev'ry ray of light,

16 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

Now tyrant-like his conquest he maintains,
And o'er his groaning slave with rods of iron reigns.

The end of the first act.

ACT II. SCENE I.

The Street.

Green. Mosby.

Gr. You pity me, and know not my estate.
I'm ruin'd, *Mosby*, thoughtless and ill-advised,
My riotous youth will leave my age a beggar.
These abbey-lands were all the hopes I'd left;
My whole support.

Mos. Base and ungen'rous *Arden*,
To force a man, born equal to himself,
To beg, or starve.

Gr. By heaven, I will do neither :
I'll let the proud oppressor know——

Mos. How blind is rage !
Who threatens his enemy, lends him a sword
To guard himself.—

Gr. Robb'd of the means of life,
What's life itself ? an useless load, a curse :
Which yet I'll dearly sell to my revenge.

Mos. You mean to kill him then ?

Gr. I do, by heaven.

Mos. Suppose you fail —

Gr. I can but lose my life.

Mos. Then where is your revenge, when he,
secure,
Riots unbounded in his ill-got wealth ?

Gr. What can I do ?

Mos. 'Tis plain you wish him dead.

Gr.

Gr. Each moment of his life is to my soul
A tedious age of pain; for while he lives,
Contempt and all the ills a lazar knows,
Must be my wretched lot, and lengthen out
The miserable hours. What groveling wretch
Wou'd wish to hold his life on such conditions?

Mos. But change the scene: suppose but *Arden*
dead,

Your land restor'd, and fortune in your pow'r;
Honour, respect, and all the dear delights
That wait on wealth, shall wing the joyful hours,
And life contracted seem one happy day.

I hate this *Arden*, and have stronger motives
Than any you can urge to wish his death;
He has accus'd, insulted, struck me,
Nay, his fair, virtuous wife, on my account—

Gr. If fame speaks true, you're to be envy'd
there.

Mos. The world will talk—But be that as it
may:

I want not cause, nor will, not means, nor
friends——

Gr. Nor opportunity shall long be wanting.

Mos. Enough: his fate is fixt—See! *Bradshaw's*
here.

Enter Bradshaw.

Brad. Save, save you, gentlemen.

Mos. We thank you, neighbour.
But whither in such haste?

Brad. To the isle of *Shippey*,
To wait on good lord *Cheyney*. As he holds
In high esteem our worthy townsman *Arden*,
I shall first call on him.—'Tis well I met you,
For yonder two were but bad road-companions.

Gr. They seem of desp'rate fortunes.

Mos. Have they names?

B 3.

Brad.

18 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

Brad. One I know not: But judge him from his comrade.

The foremost of the two I knew at *Boulogne*,
Where in the late king's reign I serv'd myself:
He was a corporal then, but such a villain—
Beneath a soldier's name.—A common cut-throat,
That preys on all mankind, and knows no party.

Mos. An horrid character you give him, *Bradshaw*.

Brad. No worse than he deserves.

Mos. [*Aside*] (An useful hint:
He shall not want employment:.) What's his name?

Brad. Black Will. His family-name I never heard.

Mos. [*To Green.*] A word—write you a letter to *Alicia*:

Disguise your hand.—This honest fool may bear it.
Hint at these men.—In case her courage fail,
She will be glad to shift the deed on them.

Gr. I am instructed.

Enter Black Will and Shakebag.

B. Will. What, comrade *Bradshaw*! How fare you, man? S'blood! dost not remember honest *Black Will*? Why, thou'rt grown purse proud sure.

Brad. Why you're not easily forgotten, *Will*. But, prithee, what brings thee to *Feversham*?

B. Will. A soldier, you know, is at home wherever he comes. *Omne solum forti patria*. There's *Latin*—Give's a tester.

Brad. In time of peace we should apply to some honest creditable business, and not turn the name of soldier into vagabond.

B. Will. Yes, as you have done. I'm told, you keep a goldsmith's shop here in *Feversham*, and, like

like a mechanical rogue, live by cheating. I have more honour.

Brad. Wou'd thou had'st honesty.

B. Will. Where do our honesties differ? I take a purse behind an hedge, and you behind a counter.

Brad. Insolent slave!

B. Will. You *cent. per cent.* rascal! I may find a time to teach you better manners.

Brad. Go, mend thy own.

B. Will. Thou wert always a sneaking fellow, *Bradshaw*, and cou'dst never swear, nor get drunk. Come, shall I and my comrade *Shakebag* taste your ale?

Brad. My house entertains no such guests. Farewel, gentlemen.

Mos. Along with *Bradshaw*,
And leave the management of these to me. [*Aside to Green.*]

Gr. It shall be done.—*Bradshaw*, a word with thee.

Brad. Your pardon, gentlemen. [*Exeunt Green and Bradshaw.*]

B. Will. He was a cadet in the last *French* war, like other soldiers then; but now he has got a nest, and feather'd it a little, he pretends to reputation. S'blood! had this been a fit place, he had not scap'd me so. You have survey'd us well. [*To Mosby*] How do you like us?

Mos. Methinks I read truth, prudence, secrecy, And courage writ upon your manly brows.

B. Will. What hellish villany has this fellow in hand, that makes him fawn upon us? [*Aside.*]

Mos. I fear the world's a stranger to your merit.
If this may recommend me to your friendship—
[*Gives a purse.*]

B. Will.

20 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

B. Will. Of what damn'd deed is this to be the wages?

Shake. Hast ever an elder brother's throat to cut?

B. Will. Or an old peevish father to be buried?

Mos. Neither of these.

Shake. A rival then mayhap—

Mos. There you come nearer to me.

Shake. Then speak out.

We're honest, sir.

B. Will. Trusty, and very poor.

Mos. Metal too fit for me. [*Aside.*] Then hear me, sir.—

But you must both, ere I disclose my purpose,

Promise and bind that promise by your oaths—

Nèver — [*They both laugh.*] Why this unseasonable mirth?

B. Will. You'd have us swear? —

Mos. Else why did I propose it?

B. Will. There's the jest. Are men who act in despite of all law, honour, and conscience; who live by blood (as it is plain you think we do); are we free-thinkers, like silly wenches and canting priests to be confin'd by oaths?

Shake. Wou'd you bind us, let the price equal the purchase, and we'll go to hell for you with pleasure.

Mos. Horrid! they shock ev'n me who wou'd employ 'em. [*Aside.*]

I apprehend—The business then is this:

In *Feversham* there lives a man, call'd *Arden*;

In general esteem, and ample means;

And has a wife, the very pride of nature.

I have been happy long in her affections,

And, he once dead, might with her share his fortunes.

He's jealous too of late, and threatens me.

Love,

Love, int'rest, self-defence, all ask his death.—

B. Will. This man you'd have dispatch'd?

Mos. I wou'd.

B. Will. Rich, you say?

Mos. Immensely so.

B. Will. And much belov'd?

Mos. By all degrees of men.

B. Will. *George!* this will be a dang'rous piece of work.

Shake. Damn'd dangerous. A man so known; and of his reputation too.

B. Will. And then the pow'r and number of his friends must be consider'd.

Mos. What! does your courage shrink already, sirs?

Shake. No.

B. Will. This is ever the curse of your men of true valour; to be the tools of crafty cowardly knaves, who have not the heart to execute what their heads have projected. It is a damn'd ungrateful world—What money have you more about you?

Mos. Ten pieces.

B. Will. I've had as much for stealing a dog.

Mos. I give you that as a retaining fee: When the deed's done, each shall have twice that sum, And a good horse to further his escape.

B. Will. Sir, will you have him murder'd in a church?

Shake. Or on the altar; say the word, and it shall be done.

Mos. Some safer place, the street, highway, or fields Will serve my turn as well.

Shake. Just as you please.

Mos.

22 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

Mos. Where may I find you, gentlemen?

B. Will. At *Adam Fowl's*, the *Flower-de-luce*.

Mos. I have confederates in this design;
When w^e have contriv'd the manner of his death,
I'll send you word.

B. Will. You'll find us always ready.

Mos. And determined?

B. Will. Ay, fear it not. Farewel. [*Exeunt
several ways.*]

SCENE, a room in *Arden's house*.

Enter Alicia with a letter.

He doubts me; yet he dare not tell me so,
But thus, by *Green*, whets my unsettled mind.

[*Reads.*]

"Strike home, or not at all. In case you fail,
"We have found instruments by means of *Brad-*
"shaw."

He shall not find me undetermined now.

Hark!—*Michael's* on the watch.—If *Arden* sleeps,
(For so he seem'd dispos'd,) he'll bring me word.

That, that's the safest time. This promis'd marriage
With *Mosby's* sister, has remov'd his qualms.

Enter Michael.

Why dost thou break upon me unawares?

What of your master?

Mich. He's scarce sunk to rest,
But full of meditated rage 'gainst *Mosby*.

Alic. He'll sleep in peace ere long.—

Mich. Think not on that.

O did *Maria* bless me with her smiles,
As you do *Mosby*, had I twenty lives,
I'd risque 'em all to win her to my arms.

Alic. I prithee leave me, *Michael*. [*Exit Michael.*]

What is nature!

There is a pow'r in love, subdues to itself
All other passions in the human mind.

This

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM. 23

This wretch, more fearful than the lonely murderer,

Whom with inquiring eyes some stranger views,
Wou'd meet the king of terrors undismay'd,
For her he loves, and dare him to the combat.
And shall not I preserve my *Mosby's* life,
And shall not I—A husband!—What's a husband?
I have a soul above th'unnatural tie,
That tells me, I'm his right, and only his,
Who won my virgin heart.—Ye tender parents,
Whose cruel kindness made your child thus
wretched,

Turn not your eyes towards earth to view this
scene;

'Twill make you sad in heav'n. [Exit.

SCENE III. *Another room. Arden sleeping on a couch.*

Enter Alicia with a dagger in her hand.

Alic. See!—Jealousy o'erwatch'd is sunk to rest,
While fearful guilt knows no security,
But in repeated crimes. My weary eyes,
Each moment apprehensive of his vengeance,
Must seek for rest in vain 'till his are clos'd.

Then for our mutual peace, and *Mosby's* love—
[Approaching to stab him, starts.

He wakes—Defend me from his just revenge!
And yet he sees me not, nor moves a finger
To save his threaten'd life. Then whence that
voice,

That pierc'd my ears, and cry'd, *Alicia*, hold!
Can mimic fancy cheat the outward sense,
And form such sounds? If these heart-racking
thoughts

Precede the horrid act, what must ensue?

Worse plague I cannot fear from *Arden's* death,
But

But from his life—the death of him, I love;
 Perish the hated husband.—Wherefore hated!
 Is he not all that my vain sex cou'd wish?
 My eyes, while they survey his graceful form,
 Condemn my heart, and wonder how it stray'd.
 He sighs—he starts—he groans. His body sleeps,
 But restless grief denies his mind repose.
 Perhaps he dreams of me; perhaps he sees me.
 Thus like a fury, broke from deepest hell,
 Lust in my heart, and murder in my hand——

[*Alicia drops the dagger. Arden starts up.*]

Ard. Her dagger, *Michael*—seize it, and I'm safe.
 How strong she is?—Oh!—what a fearful dream!
 Before me still! speak, vision—art thou *Alicia*,
 Or but the coinage of my troubled brain?

Alic. O *Arden*—husband—lord——

Ard. Art thou my wife?

Thou'rt substance——I am wrap'd in wonder——
 hence——

Hast lost all sense of fear, as well as shame,
 That thou durst haunt me thus, asleep and waking,
 Thou idol, and thou torment of my soul?

Alic. My bleeding heart——

Ard. Away, begone and leave me:

Left, in the transports of unbounded rage,
 I rush upon thee, and deface those charms,
 That first enslav'd my soul; mangle that face
 Where, spite of falsehood, beauty triumphs still;
 Mar that fair frame, and crush thee into atoms.
 Avoid me, and be safe—Nay, now you drive me
 hence.

[*Alicia kneels, he turns away.*]

Cruel and false as thou hast been to me,
 I cannot see thee wring thy suppliant hands,
 And weep, and kneel in vain.—— [Exit *Arden*.]

Alic. This, this is he

I came prepar'd to murder. *Curst Alicia!*

[Takes up the dagger.]

In thy own bosom plunge the fatal steel,
Or his, who robb'd thee of thy fame and virtue—
It will not be—Fear holds my dastard hand :
Those chaster pow'rs that guard the nuptial bed
From foul pollution, and the hand from blood,
Have left their charge, and I am lost for ever.

[Exit.]

The end of the second act.

ACT III. SCENE I. *A road or high-way near Feversham.*

Black Will and Shakebag.

Shake. Damnation! posted as you were, to let him 'scape!

B. Will. I pray thee, peace.

Shake. Green and I beheld him pass carelessly by within reach of your dagger. If you had held it but naked in your hand, he wou'd have stabbed himself as he walk'd.

B. Will. I had not power to do it: a sudden damp came over me;—I never felt so in my life—A kind of palsy seized me.

Shake. Palsy! when you're upon your duty! Go, go and sleep, or drink away your fears. You tremble still.—

B. Will. I tremble! my courage was never yet call'd in question, villain. When I fought at *Boulogne* under 'e late king, both armies knew, and fear'd me.

Shake. That might be, because they did not know you. Dog, I'll shake you off to your old trade of filching in a throng—Murder's too genteel a business for your capacity.—Sirrah, I have taken

C

more

26 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

more gold at noon-day, than ever you filch'd copper by candlelight.

B. Will. Cowardly slave, you lye.

Shake. A coward ! S'blood ! that shall be proved.
Come on.

B. Will. To thy heart's blood.

Shake. To thine. [*They fight.*]

Enter Green.

Gr. What ! are you mad ! For shame put up your swords.

Shake. Not till I've had his life.

B. Will. Fool, guard thy own.

Gr. Pray hear me, gentlemen.

B. Will. Stand farther off.

Shake. Away.

Gr. This broil will ruin all.

Shake. He begun it.

B. Will. Ay, and will end it too.

Gr. Arden, you know, returns, and will you let him

Escape a second time ?

Shake. Who did the first ?

Gr. No matter, that may be repair'd.

B. Will. Brand me with cowardice !

Gr. Come, come, you're both to blame.

Speak, will you lay aside this senseless broil ?

B. Will. Nay, let him speak.

Shake. Why, rather than lose this opportunity—

[*Puts up his sword.*]

B. Will. Ay—We'll defer it 'till Arden's dead.

I'm for doing business first, and then for play—

Shake. Challenge me when thou darest.

Gr. The night draws on. Are you resolv'd ?

Shake. We are.

Gr. Enough.—See where he comes. I must withdraw ;

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM. 27

But when you've done the deed, and sent his soul—
No matter where—I'll come to you again. [*Exit*
Green.]

B. Will. Something rises in my throat—I can
scarce breathe—I'd rather poison half a dozen car-
dinals, than kill this honest man, but—I'll do't,
for my reputation.

Shake. He comes. Retire a little. Let him
advance, then bury your dagger in his heart. If
you fail, I'll second you.

B. Will. Stand further off, I shall not need your
aid.

Shake. Now strike—

Enter Arden first, and then Lord Cheyney attended.

B. Will. Again prevented! Ten thousand devils
take them all!

L. Chey. Arden, well met. You're to the isle of
Shippey

Grown quite a stranger. Shall we see you there?

Arden. I purpos'd soon't have waited on your lord-
ship.

L. Chey. Well, will you sup with me to night at
Shorlow?

Arden. Franklin, my lord, who is my guest at
present,

Expects me at my house.

L. Chey. Then will you dine with me tomorrow?

Arden. I'll not fail your lordship.

L. Chey. Believe me, worthy friend, I'm glad to
see you.

Walk you towards *Feversham?*

Arden. So please your lordship.

[*Exeunt Lord Cheyney, and Arden.*]

B. Will. Just as I'd taken aim too!—S'blood I
cou'd kill myself for vexation.

C 2 *Enter*

28 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

Enter Green.

Gr. Well, *Arden* is at last dispatch'd ?

Shake. Yes, safe to *Feversham*.

Gr. Safe, say you ! his good fortune mocks us all.

These strange escapes have almost stagger'd me ;
But thinking of my wrongs, I'm more confirm'd.

B. Will. Well said, my man of resolution ! A gentleman commits a murder with double the satisfaction for such a heart.—We must lay our snares more cunning for the future.

Gr. We shou'd consult with *Michael*, *Arden's* man—

The pigmy-hearted wretch, though long ago.
He swore his master dead, acts with reluctance.

Shake. The coward must be spurr'd.—He does it, or he dies.

Gr. I wonder at his absence, as he knew
Of this attempt, and promis'd to be here.

Enter Michael.

Mich. I saw my master and lord *Cheyney* pass,
And my heart leap'd for joy. [*Apart.*

B. Will. What says the villain ?

Mich. Would I were gone. [*Aside.*] Sir, if I
give offence— [*Going.*

Gr. Michael, come back ; you must not leave us
so.

Mich. What is your pleasure ?

Gr. Why, we understand
You are in love with *Mosby's* beauteous sister.

Mich. Suppose I am.

B. Will. You deal too mildly with the peasant.
You swore to kill your master, villain. Be an
honest man of your word, and do't then, white
liver.

Mich. Sir, I repented.

B. Will.

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM. 29

B. Will. Repented ! what's that ? Dog, know your rank, and act as we command, or your heart's blood—

Mich. What must I do ? [*Frighted.*]

B. Will. Do ! you must shew us the house, appoint the time and place, and lure your master thither—We'll take care of him without your trouble.

Gr. So shall you purchase noble *Mosby's* friendship,
And, by his friendship, gain his sister's love.

Mich. They'll murder me too, shou'd I not comply — [*Aside.*]

Gr. Think on your love, your interest.

B. Will. Or your death.

Mich. To night, soon as the abbey-clock strikes ten, [*Trembling.*]

Come to his house : I'll leave the doors unbarr'd :
The left-hand stairs lead to my master's chamber ;
There take him, and dispose him as you please.

Gr. This cannot fail.

Shake. Unless this love-sick coward thinks to deceive us.

Mich. I will not, by heaven !

B. Will. I believe thee ; for by hell thou dar'st not. [*Exeunt.*]

Mich. Master, thy constant love and daily bounty
Deserve more grateful offices from *Michael*.

[*Exit weeping.*]

SCENE II. *A room in Arden's house.*

Alicia alone.

Alic. When vice has spread her poison thro' the
foul,

How lifeless, slow, confus'd, and insincere
Are our resolves in the pursuits of virtue !

What wonder then heaven shou'd refuse its aid

30 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

To thoughts, that only blossom for a time ;
Look blooming to the eye, but yield no fruit.

Enter Mosby.

Mos. I come, *Alicia*, to partake thy griefs ;
For fire divided burns with lesser force.

Alic. I know thee : thou art come to fan the
flame,

Thy breath hath kindled here, till it consume us.
But tears and sighs shall stifle in my heart
The guilty passion —

Mos. ——— Is heroic love,
That form'd the bright examples of thy sex,
Made their lives glorious, and their fame immortal,
A crime in thee ? Art thou not mine by oaths,
By mutual sufferings, by contract mine ?

Alic. Why do you urge a rash, a fatal promise,
I had no right to make, or you to ask ?
Why did you practise on my easy heart ?
Why did I ever listen to your vows ?
In me 'twas foolish guilt and disobedience ;
In you 'twas avarice, insolence, and pride.

Mos. 'Twas love in me, and gratitude in you.

Alic. 'Twas insolence in you, meanness in me,
And madness in us both. My careful parents,
In scorn of your presumption and my weakness,
Gave me in marriage to a worthy gentleman,
Of birth and fortune, equal to my own.
Three years I liv'd with him without reproach,
And made him in that time the happy father
Of two most lovely children. I too was happy ;
At least I liv'd in hopes I might be so :
For time, and gratitude, and *Arden's* love,
I hop'd might quench my guilty flame for you,
And make my heart a present worthy him.

Mos. And dost thou glory in thy perjuries ?
In love, inconstancy alone's a crime.

Think

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM. 31

Think on the ardor of our youthful passion,
 Think how we play'd with love; nor thought it
 guilt,
 Till thy first falshood (call it not obedience)
 Thy marriage with this *Arden* made me desperate;
 Think on the transports of our love renew'd,
 And —

Alic. Hide the rest, lest list'ning winds shou'd
 hear,

And publish to the world our shameful tale.
 Here let remembrance of our follies die.

Mos. Shall our loves wither in their early bloom?

Alic. Their harvest else will be to both our
 shames.

Hast thou not made a monster of me, *Mosby*?

You shou'd abhor me, I abhor myself.

When unperceiv'd I stole on *Arden's* sleep,
 (Hell steel'd my heart, and death was in my hand)

Pale anguish brooded on his ashy cheek,
 And chilly sweats stood shivering on his brow.

Relentless murder, at a sight so sad,
 Gave place to pity; and as he wak'd, I stood
 Irresolute, and drown'd in tears.

Mos. She's lost,

And I in vain have stain'd my soul with blood.

[*Aside.*

Alic. Give o'er in time: in vain are your at-
 tempts

Upon my *Arden's* life; for heaven, that wrested
 The fatal weapon from my trembling hand,
 Still has him in its charge.

Mos. Little she thinks,

[*Aside.*

That *Arden's* dead ere now.—It must be so;
 I've but that game to play, ere it be known.

Alic. I know our dang'rous state; I hesitate;
 I tremble for your life; I dread reproach.

But

32 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

But we've offended, and must learn to suffer.

Mos. Then *Arden* live in his *Alicia* blest,
And *Mosby* wretched. Yet shou'd chance or nature

Lay *Arden* gently in a peaceful grave,
Might I presume to hope? *Alicia*, speak.

Alic. How shall I look into my secret thoughts,
And answer what I fear to ask myself? [*A long pause.*

Mos. Silence speaks best for me. His death
once known,

I must forswear the fact, and give these tools
To public justice—and not live in fear. [*Aside.*
Thy heart is mine. I ask but for my own.

[*To her.*

Truth, gratitude, and honour bind you to me,
Or else you never lov'd.

Alic.—Then why this struggle?
Not lov'd! O had my love been justly plac'd,
As sure it was exalted and sincere,
I should have gloried in it, and been happy.
But I'll no longer live the abject slave
Of loose desire—I disclaim the thought.

Mos. I'll ask no more what honour should deny;
By heaven, I never will.

Alic. Well then remember,
On that condition only, I renew
My vows. If time and the event of things

[*Giving her hand.*

Should ever make it lawful, I'll be yours.

Mos. O my full joys!—

Alic. Suppress thy frantic transports,
My heart recoils, I am betray'd, O give me back
My promised faith.

Mos. First, let the world dissolve.

Alic. There is no joy, nor peace for you, or me:
All our engagements cannot but be fatal.

Mos.

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM. 33

Mos. The time may come when you'll have
other thoughts

'Till then, farewell.—[*Aside.*] Now, Fortune,
do thy worst. [*Exit.*]

Alic. Mosby, return——He's gone, and I am
wretched.

I shou'd have banish'd him my sight for ever.
You happy fair ones, whose untainted fame
Has never yet been blasted with reproach,
Fly from th'appearance of dishonour far.
Virtue is arbitrary, nor admits debate:
To doubt is treason in her rigid court;
But if ye parley with the foe, you're lost. [*Exit.*]

SCENE, *another room in Arden's house.*

Arden and Franklin sitting together on a couch:
Arden thoughtful.

Frank. Nay, wonder not.—Tho' ev'ry circum-
stance

Thus strangely met to prove the lady false,
And justify the husband's horrid vengeance;
Yet it appears to ev'ry honest eye,
(Too late for the poor lady) she was wrong'd.

Ard. Is't possible?

Frank.——Ay very possible:

He lives that proves it so. Conceal'd from justice,
He pines with ceaseless sorrow for his guilt,
And each hour bends him lower towards his grave.

Ard. I know thy friendship, and perceive its drift.
I'll bear my wrongs—for sure I have been wrong'd.
Do I but think so then! What fools are men
Whom love and hatred, anger, hope, and fear,
And all the various passions, rule by turns,
And in their several turns alike deceive?

Frank. To cast away, and on suspicion only,
A jewel, like *Alicia*, were to her

Unjust,

34 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

Unjust, and cruel to yourself. [*Clock strikes ten.*]

Good night,

The clock has stricken ten.

Ard. I thought it more.

Frank. I thought it not so much.

Ard. Why, thus it is:

Our happy hours are few, and fly so swift,

That they are past ere we begin to count 'em:

But when with pain and misery oppress'd,

Anticipating Time's unvarying pace,

We think each heavy moment is an age.

Frank. Come, let's to rest. Impartial as the grave,

Sleep robs the cruel tyrant of his pow'r,

Gives rest and freedom to the o'erwrought slave,

And steals the wretched beggar from his want.

Droop not, my friend, sleep will suspend thy cares,

And time will end them.

Ard. True, for time brings death,

The only certain end of human woes.

Sleep interrupts, but waking we're restor'd

To all our griefs again. Watching and rest

Alternately succeeding one another,

Are all the idle business of dull life.

What shall we call this undetermin'd state,

This narrow isthmus 'twixt two boundless oceans,

That whence we came, and that to which we tend?

Is it life checker'd with the sleep of death?

Or death enliven'd by our waking dreams?

But we'll to bed. Here, *Michael*, bring the lights.

Enter Michael with lights.

Heaven send you good repose.

[*Gives Franklin a candle.*]

Frank. The like to you.

Mich. Shall I attend you, sir?

Frank.

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM. 35

Frank. No, no, I choose to be alone. Good night.
 [*Exit Franklin. Michael attends his master with the other light, and returns.*]

Mich. I, who shou'd take my weapon in my hand,
 And guard his life with hazard of my own,
 With fraudulent smiles have led him, unsuspecting,
 Quite to the jaws of death—But I've an oath.
Mosby has bound me with an horrid vow,
 Which if I break, these dogs have sworn my death.
 I've left the doors unbar'd.—Hark! 'twas the latch.

They come—I hear their oaths, and see their daggers

Insulting o'er my master's mangled body,
 While he for mercy pleads.—Good master, live:
 I'll bar the doors again. But shou'd I meet 'em—
 What's that?—I heard 'em cry, Where is this coward?

Arden once dead, they'll murder me for sport.
 Help—call the neighbours—Master—*Franklin*—help.

Enter Arden and Franklin, undress'd, at several doors.

Ard. What dismal outcry's this?

Frank. What frights thee, *Michael*?

Mich. My master!—*Franklin*!

Ard. Why do'st tremble so?

Mich. I dream'd the house was full of thieves and murderers. [*Trembling.*]

Ard. Dream'd! what, awake! Are all the doors made fast?

Mich. I think they are.

Ard. I'll go and see myself. [*Exit Arden.*]

Frank. You made a fearful noise.

Mich. Did I?—

Ard.

36 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

Ard. [within] Why *Michael*!

Frank. You tremble still.—Has any one been here?

Mich. No, I hope not. My master will be angry.

Enter Arden.

Ard. This negligence not half contents me, sir :
The doors were all left open.

Mich. Sir——

Ard. To bed,
And as you prize my favour be more careful.

[*Exit Michael.*]

Frank. 'Tis very cold. Once more, my friend—

Ard. —— Good night.

[*Exit Arden.*]

Scene changes to the street before Arden's door, the door shut.

Enter Black Will, and Shakebag.

B. Will. Zounds! *Michael* has betray'd us—
The doors are fast. Away, away—Disperse.

[*Exeunt.*]

The end of the third act.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

An Inn, the Flower-de-Luce.

Mosby and Michael.

Mich. Tho' I with oaths appeal'd to conscious
heav'n,

That *Arden* rose and shut the doors him-
self,

Yet, but for *Green*, these bloody rogues had kill'd
me.

We must desist—*Franklin* and sweet *Maria*

Have

Have promis'd, at *Alica's* own request,
To interfere——

Mos. —— Such ever be the employ
Of him I hate.

Mich. —— The mourning fair, all chang'd,
By me conjures you, (and with tears she spake it,)
Not to involve yourself and her in ruin,
By seeking to renew a correspondence,
She has renounced for ever.

Mos. How! confusion!

Mich. And hopes, as heaven, in answer to her
prayers,
Hath reconcil'd her duty and affection;
You will approve her resolution——

Mos. Doubtless!

Mich. And learn by her example, to subdue
Your guilty passion——

Mos. Ha, ha, ha, exquisite woman!
So! rather than not change, she'll love her husband!

But she will not persevere.

Mich. Yes, shure, she will.

Mos. Have I then slighted her whole sighing sex,
Bid opportunity and fortune wait;
And all to be forsaken for an husband!
By heaven, I am glad he has so oft escap'd,
That I may have him murder'd in her sight.

Enter Green.

Green. How strange a providence attends this man!

'Tis vain to strive with heaven—Let's give it o'er.

Mos. No: when I do, may I be curst for ever,
Hopeless to love, and hate without revenge:
May I ne'er know an end of disappointment,
But prest with hard necessity, like thee,
Live the contempt of my insulting foe.

D

Green.

38 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

Green. I scorn the abject thought—Had he a life
Hung on each hair, he dies—If we succeed, [*To*
Michael.

This very night *Maria* shall be thine.

Mich. I am a man again.

Mos. I've thought a way—

That may be easy under friendship's mask,
Which to a foe suspected may be hard.

Green. Friendship! impossible—

Mos. — You know him not.

You, with your ruffians, in the street shall seek
him.

I follow at some distance. They begin
(No matter how) a quarrel, and at once
Assault him with their swords.—Straight I appear,
Forget all wrongs, and draw in his defence;
Mark me, be sure, with some slight wound; then
fly,

And leave the rest to me.

Mich. — I know his temper.

This seeming benefit will cancel all
His former doubts, and gain his easy heart.

Green. Perhaps so—yet—

Mos. — Further debates are needless. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A room in Arden's house.*

Franklin and Maria.

Frank. Well in what temper did you find
Alicia?

Mar. Never was anguish, never grief like hers:
She eats, nor sleeps. Her lovely, downcast eyes,
That us'd to gladden each beholder's heart,
Now wash the flinty bosom of the earth.
Her troubled breast heaves with incessant sighs,
Which drink the purple streams of life, and blast
Her bloom, as storms the blossoms of the spring.

But

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM. 39

But sure her prayers must quickly reach high heaven,
Relenting *Arden*, kindly sooth her sorrows,
And her lost peace restore.

Frank. Their mutual peace, *Maria* !
For his can ne'er be found but in *Alicia*.
Asham'd to view the face of man or day,
As *Mosby's* name was written on his brow,
He cheerless wanders ; seeks the darkest gloom
To hide his drooping head, and grieve alone.
With a full heart, swollen eyes, and faltering tongue,
He sometimes, seeking to beguile his grief,
Begins a mournful tale : But straight a thought
Of his imagin'd wrongs crossing his memory,
Ends his sad story ere the half be told.
O may our pains with wish'd success be crown'd.

Enter Arden.

Ard. No, *Franklin*, no ; your friendly cares
are vain :

Were I but certain she had wrong'd my bed,
I then might hate her, and shake off my woes ;
But thus perplex'd, can never taste of comfort.

Frank. O jealousy ! thou bane of social joys !
Oh ! she's a monster, made of contradictions !
Let truth in all her native charms appear,
And with the voice of harmony itself
Plead the just cause of innocence traduc'd ;
Deaf as the adder, blind as upstart greatness,
She sees nor hears. And yet let slander whisper,
Or evil-ey'd suspicion look oblique,
Rumour has fewer tongues than she has ears ;
And *Argus's* hundred eyes are dim and slow,
To piercing jealousy's.—

Ard. —No more, no more—
I know its plagues, but where's the remedy?

Mar. In your *Alicia*.

Frank. She shall heal these wounds.

40 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

Ard. She's my disease, and can she be my cure?
My friends shou'd rather teach me to abhor her,
To tear her image from my bleeding heart.

Mar. We leave that hateful office to the fiends.

Frank. If you e'er lov'd, you'll not refuse to see
her:

You promis'd that.

Ard. Did I?

Frank. Indeed you did.

Ard. Well then, some other time.

Frank. No, see her now.

Ard. Franklin, I know my heart, and dare not
see her.

I have an husband's honour to maintain,
I fear the lover's weakness may betray.
Let me not do what honour must condemn,
And friendship blush to hear.

Frank. That *Arden* never will.

Mar. Did you but know her grief—

Ard. Am I the cause?

Have I, just heaven, have I e'er injur'd her!
Yet I'm the coward.—O prepos't'rous fear!
See where she comes—Arm'd with my num'rous
wrongs,

I'll meet with honourable confidence
'Th' offending wife, and look the honest husband.

Frank. *Maria*, we'll withdraw—even friend-
ship here

Wou'd seem impertinence.—

[*Exeunt Franklin and Maria.*]

Ard. Be still my heart.

[*Alicia enters, not seeing Arden.*]

Alic. How shall I bear my *Arden's* just re-
proaches!

Or can a reconciliation long continue,
That's founded on deceit! Can I avow

My

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM. 41

My secret guilt!—No—At so mean a thought
Abandon'd infamy herself would blush.

Nay, cou'd I live with public loss of honour,

Arden would die to see *Alicia* scorn'd.

He's here, earth open—hide me from his sight.

Ard. Guilt chains her tongue. Lo! silent self-
condemn'd,

With tearful eyes and trembling limbs she stands.

Alic. Fain would I kiss his footsteps—but that
look,

Where Indignation seems to strive with grief,

Forbids me to approach him.

Ard. Who wou'd think

That anguish were not real?

Alic. I'm rooted here.

Ard. Those tears, methinks, ev'n if her guilt
were certain,

Might wash away her pains.

Alic. Support me, heaven!

Ard. Curse on the abject thought. I shall relapse
To simple dotage. She steals on my heart,

She conquers with her eyes. If I but hear her voice,

Nor earth nor heaven, can save me from her snares.

O! let me fly—if I have yet the pow'r.

Alic. O *Arden*! do not, do not leave me thus.

[*Kneels, and holds him.*]

Ard. I pray thee loose thy hold.

Alic. O never, never.

Ard. Why should I stay to tell thee of my
wrongs,

To aggravate thy guilt, and wound thy soul?

Thyself, if all these agonizing struggles

Of tears, of sighs, of groans, of speechless sorrow

Be but sincere—thyself will do it better.

One thing I'll tell thee (for perhaps 'twill please
thee)

42 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

Thou'lt broke my heart, *Alicia*.

Alic. — Oh! [*She falls to the ground.*]

Ard. And canst thou,

Can woman pity whom she hath undone?

Why dost thou grasp my knees? what woud'st thou say,

If thou cou'dst find thy speech?

Alic. O! mercy, mercy!

Ard. Thou hast had none on me, let go my hand:

Why dost thou press it to thy throbbing heart,
That beats — but not for me?

Alic. Then may it ne'er beat more.

Ard. At least, I'm sure it did not always so.

Alic. For that my soul is pierc'd with deep remorse,

For that I bow me to the dust before thee,
And die to be forgiven. O *Arden!* *Arden!*

Ard. Presumptuous fool! what business hast thou here?

Did I not know my weakness, and her pow'r!
Rise—rise—*Alicia*.

Alic. No: here let me lie

On the bare bosom of this conscious earth,
'Till *Arden* speak the words of peace and comfort,
Or my heart break before him.

Ard. O *Alicia*,

Thou inconsistent spring of grief and joy,
Whence bitter streams, and sweet alternate flow,
Come to my arms, and in this too fond bosom
Disburden all the fulness of thy soul.

Alic. Let me approach with awe that sacred temple,

Resume my seat, and dwell for ever there.

Ard. There ever reign, as on thy native throne,
Thou lovely wanderer.

Alic.

Alic. Am I at last,
In error's fatal mazes long bewilder'd,
Permitted here to find my peace and safety!

Ard. Dry up thy tears; and tell me, truly tell
me:
Has my long-suffering love at length prevail'd,
And art thou mine indeed?

Alic. Heaven is my witness,
I love thee, *Arden*; and esteem thy love
Above all earthly good. Thy kind forgiveness
Speaks to my soul that peaceful calm confirm'd,
Which reason and reflexion had begun.

Ard. Thou'rt cheaply purchas'd with unnum-
ber'd sighs,
With many a bitter tear, and years of patience,
Thou treasure of more worth than mines of gold.
I will not doubt my happiness. Thou art,
Thou wilt be mine, ever, and only mine.

Alic. I am, I will. I ne'er knew joy 'till now.

Ard. This is our truest, happiest nuptial day.
To-night, thou knowest according to my custom,
Our yearly fair returning with St. Valentine,
I treat my friends. I go to countenance
Their honest mirth, and cheer them with my
bounty.

'Till happy night farewell. My best *Alicia*,
How will our friends rejoice, our foes repine,
To see us thus?

Alic. — Thus ever may they see us!
The wandering fires that have so long misled me,
Are now extinguish'd, and my heart is *Arden's*.
The flow'ry path of innocence and peace
Shines bright before, and I shall stray no longer.
Whence then these sighs, and why these floods of
tears?

Sighs are the language of a broken heart,

And

44 ARDEN of FEVERSHAM.

And tears the tribute each enlighten'd eye
Pays, and must pay, for vice and folly past.
And yet the painful'st virtue hath its pleasure:
Tho' dangers rise, yet peace restor'd within,
My soul collected shall undaunted meet them.

Tho' trouble, grief, and death, the lot of all,
On good and bad without distinction fall;
The soul which conscious innocence sustains,
Supports with ease these temporary pains;
But stung with guilt and loaded by despair,
Becomes itself a burden none can bear.

SCENE IV, *The street. People at a distance as
at a Fair.*

*Enter Arden on one side, and Black Will and Shake-
bag on the other, Green directing them.*

B. Will. Shakebag, you'll second me—S'blood,
give the way. [*Jostles Arden.*]

Shake. May we not pass the streets?

Arden. I saw you not.

B. Will. Your sight perhaps is bad, your feeling
may be better. [*Strikes him.*]

Arden. Insolent villains! [*Draws.*]

B. Will. Come, we'll teach you manners.

Arden. Both at once! barb'rous cowards!

Enter Mosby.

Mosby. O bloody dogs! attempt a life so pre-
cious!—

B. Will. This is a fury, George.

[*Black Will. and Shakebag beaten off.*]

Shake. —I've pink'd him tho'—

Arden. Villains come back, and finish your design.

Mosby. Shall I pursue them, sir?

Arden. Not for the world—

Mosby! amazing generosity!

Mos. I hope you are not hurt.

Ard. Pierc'd to the heart——

Mos. Forbid it, heaven! quick, let me fly for help.

Ard. With sharp reflexion:—*Mosby*, I can't bear

To be so far oblig'd to one I've wrong'd.

Mos. Who wou'd not venture life to save a friend?

Ard. From you I've not deserv'd that tender name.

Mos. No more of that—wou'd I were worthy of it!

Ard. I own my heart, by boiling passions torn,
Forgets its gentleness—yet is ever open
To melting gratitude. O say what price
Can buy your friendship?

Mos. ——Only think me yours.

Ard. Easy indeed. I am too much oblig'd.
Why reek'd not your good sword its justice on me,
When mad with jealous rage, in my own house,
I urg'd you to my ruin?

Mos. ——I lov'd you then
With the same warmth as now.

Ard. ——What's here! you bleed.
Let me bind up your wound.

Mos. ——A trifle, sir——

Ard. Your friendship makes it so.—See, *Franklin*,
see

[*Enter Franklin.*]

The man I treated as a coward, bleeding,
(Wretch that I am!) for his defence of me.

Look to your wound. And, *Mosby*, let us hope
You'll sup with me. There will be honest *Brad-*
shaw,

And *Franklin* here, and——

Mos.

46 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

Mos. ——Sir, I will not fail.

Frank. I shall not come.

Ard. ——Nay, *Franklin*, that's unkind.

Prithee——

Frank. ——Nay, urge me not.—I have my reasons.

Mos. Avoids my company!—So much the better. His may not be so proper. [*Aside*]—An hour hence, If you are not engag'd, we'll meet at *Fowl's*.

Ard. I will be there.

Mos. 'Till then I take my leave. [*Exit. Mosby.*

Ard. How have I been mistaken in this man?

Frank. How are you sure, you're not mistaken 'now?

Ard. No doubt he loves me; and I blush to think How I've suspected him, and wrong'd *Alicia*.

Frank. May you be ever happy in you wife:

But——

Ard. Speak—But what? Let's have no riddles here.

Can she be innocent, and *Mosby* guilty?

Frank. To speak my thoughts, this new officious fondness

Makes me suspect:—I like him worse than ever.

Ard. Because I like him better. What a churl!

Frank. You're credulous, and treat my serious doubts

With too much levity. You vex me, *Arden*. [*Exit.*

Ard. Believe me, friend, you'll laugh at this hereafter. [*Exit the other way.*

Mosby, having watch'd *Franklin* out, re-enters with *Green*,

Mos. The surly friend has left him—As I wish'd— You see how eagerly the foolish fowl Flies headlong to our snare: now to inclose him. At eight the guests are bidden to his banquet,

And

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM. 47

And only *Michael*, of his numerous train,
Keeps home with his *Alicia*. He'll secure
The keys of all the doors, and let you in
With my two trusty blood-hounds. *Alicia* seems
Averse at present—

Gr. — She'll not dare betray us.

Mos. Not when the deed is done. We know
too much.

She'll be our prisoner, and shall be observ'd.
Towards evening, then, upon a slight pretence
To pass an hour at draughts, (a game he loves)
I'll draw this husband home. You'll be prepar'd
In th' inner room, (*Michael* will shew it you)
'Till at a signal given, you all rush forth,
And strangle him.

Gr. Good—'tis a death that leaves
No bloody character to mark the place.

Mos. Howe'er, come all provided with your
daggers.

Do you seek *Michael*, I'll instruct the rest.

Gr. What shall the signal be?

Mos. — These words in th' game,
I take you now.

Gr. — *Arden!* thou'rt taken now indeed.

Mos. His body, thrown behind the abbey-wall,
Shall be descried by th'early passenger
Returning from the Fair.—My friend, thy hand—
Shakes it!—Be firm, and our united strength
With ease shall cast dead *Arden* to the earth.

Gr. Thanks to his foolish tenderness of soul.

Mos. True, he who trusts an old inveterate foe,
Bares his own-breast, and courts the fatal blow.

The end of the fourth act.

ACT

48 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

ACT V. SCENE I. *Arden's house.*

Alicia alone.

What have I heard! Is this the house of *Arden*!

O! that the power which has so often sav'd him,
Wou'd send his guardian angel to him now,
To whisper in his ear his present danger!

Fly, *Arden*, fly, avoid this fatal roof,
Where murder lurks, and certain death awaits
thee:

Wander—no matter where—Turn but from hence,
Thou canst not miss thy way.—The house is
theirs.—

I am suspected—*Michael* guards the door—

And ev'n *Maria's* absent. Bloody *Mosby*,

These are the fruits of thy detested lust.

But hark, the fiends approach.—*Green* had hu-
manity,

[*Enter Green, Black Will, Shakebag, Michael.*]

Cou'd I prevail on him!—O fir—

[*Talks apart with Green.*]

B. Will. What a fair house! rich furniture!
what piles of massy plate! And then yon iron
chest. Good plunder, comrade.

Shake. And madam *Arden* there—A prize worth
them all to me.

B. Will. And shall that fawning, whiteliver'd
coward, *Mosby*, enjoy all these?

Shake. No doubt he wou'd, were we the fools
he thinks us.

Gr. Had he as many lives as drops of blood,
I'd have them all.— [To *Alicia*.]

Alic. But for one single night—

Gr. I'd not defer his fate a single hour,
Tho' I were sure myself to die the next.

So, peace, irresolute woman—and be thankful
For thy own life.

T O A

Alic.

Alic. ——— O mercy, mercy—

Gr. Yes,

Such mercy as the nursing lioness,
When drain'd of moisture by her eager young,
Shews to the prey that first encounters her.

B. Will. Who talks of mercy, when I am here?

Gr. She wou'd prevent us; but our steady
courage

Laughs at her coward arts. [*Knocking gently at the gate.*

Why, *Michael.*

Mich. ——— Sir!

Gr. Thou bloodless coward, what dost tremble
at?

Dost thou not hear a knocking at the gate?

[*Exit Michael.*

Mosby, no doubt. How like a sly adulterer,
Who steals at midnight, and with caution gives
Th'appointed signal to his neighbour's wife.

B. Will. Which is the place where we're to be
conceal'd?

Gr. This inner room.

B. Will. 'Tis well. ——— The word is, Now I
take you. [*Knocking louder than before.*

Gr. Ay, there's authority. That speaks the
master.

He seems in haste: 'Twere pity he shou'd wait,
Now we're so well prepar'd for his reception.

[*Green, Black Will, and Shakebag, go into the
inner room.*

Alicia remains alone.

Alic. Now whither are they gone? — The door's
unbar'd.

I hear the sound of feet. Shou'd it be *Arden*,
And *Mosby* with him—I can't bear the doubt,

Nor wou'd I be resolv'd. Be hush'd my fears,

'Tis *Mosby*, and alone. [*Enter Mosby.*] Sir; hear
me, *Mosby.*

E

Mos.

50 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

Mos. Madam, is this a time?

Alic. ———I will be heard,
And mark me, when I swear, never hereafter,
By look, word, act——

Mos. Be damn'd—your husband—

Alic. Ha! — [She screams.

Enter Arden and Michael.

Ard. Am I a monster, that I fright thee thus?

[To Michael.

Say, what has happen'd since I left the house?
Thou look'st, *Alicia*, as if wild amazement
Had chang'd thee to the image of herself.

Alic. Is *Frankland* with you?

Ard. No.

Alic. Nor *Fowl*, nor *Bradshaw*?

Ard. Neither, but both expected.——

Alic. Merciful heav'n!

Ard. I meant to dedicate this happy night
To mirth and joy, and thy returning love. [She sighs.
Make me not sad, *Alicia*: For my sake
Let discontent be banish'd from your brow,
And welcome *Arden's* friends with laughing eyes.
Amongst the first let *Mosby* be enroll'd—

Alic. The villain!

Ard. Nay, I am too well convinc'd
Of *Mosby's* friendship, and *Alicia's* love,
Ever to wrong them more by weak suspicions.
I've been indeed to blame, but I will make thee
A large amends, *Alicia*.—Look upon him,
As on the man that gave your husband's life.

Alic. Wou'd take my husband's life! — I'll tell
him all,

And cast this load of horror from my soul:
Yet, 'tis a dreadful hazard. Both must die.
A fearful thought! *Franklin* may come, or *Bradshaw*—
O let me not precipitate his fate!

[Aside.
Mos.

ARDEN of FEVERSHAM. 51

Mos. I see my presence is offensive there. [*Going.*]

Ard. *Alicia!* No—She has no will but mine.

Mos. It is not fit she shou'd :—and yet—perhaps—
'Twere better, sir—Permit me to retire.

Ard. No more—Our friendship publicly avow'd
Will clear her injur'd virtue to the world.

Mos. Something there is in that—

Ard. ————It is a debt

I owe to both your fames, and pay it freely.

Mos. For her sake then, not for my own.

Alic. [*Aside.*]——O damn'd dissembler.

Ard. Come, take your seat; this shall not save
your money.

Bring us the Tables, *Michael*— [*They sit and play.*]

Alic. [*Aside.*]——O just heaven!

Wilt thou not interpose?—How dread this pause!
Ten thousand terrors crowd the narrow space.

Ard. Your thoughts are absent, *Mosby.*

B. Will. Blood! why don't *Mosby* give the word?

Mich. Give back, the game's against him.

Alic. Fly, *Franklin!* fly, to save thy *Arden's* life.

Murder herself, that chases him in view,

Beholding me starts back, and for a moment

Suspends her thirst of blood.

[*Apart.*]

Ard. Come, give it up; I told you I shou'd win.

[*Rises.*]

Mos. No, I see an advantage; move again.

Ard. There.

Mos. Now I take you.

[*Black Will throws a scarf over Arden's head, in order to strangle him; but Arden disengages himself, wrests a dagger from Shakebag, and stands on his defence, 'till Mosby getting behind and seizing his arm, the rest assassinate him.*]

Alic. O pow'r omnipotent! make strong his arm,
Give him to conquer. Ha! my prayers are curses,

52 ARDEN of FEVERSHAM.

And draw down vengeance where they meant a blessing.

Ard. Inhospitable villain!

Alic. O! he dies.

Ard. O hold your bloody—*Mosby* too! Nay then
[*Falling.*

I yield me to my fate.—Is this, *Alicia*,
This the return for my unequal love?

Alic. Or death, or madness, wou'd be mercies now,
Therefore beyond my hopes.

Ard. O *Mosby*, *Michael*, *Green*,

Why have you drawn my blood upon your souls?

Mos. Behold her there, to whom I was betroth'd,
And ask no further—

Gr. —Think on thy abbey-lands
From injur'd *Green*.

Ard. —You now are your own judges,
But we shall meet again where right and truth—

Who—who are these? But I forgive you all.

Thy hand, *Alicia*—

Alic. —I'll not give it thee.

Ard. O wretched woman! have they kill'd thee
too?

A deadly paleness, agony, and horror
On thy sad visage sit. My soul hangs on thee,
And tho' departing—just departing—loves thee:
Is loth to leave, unreconcil'd to thee,
This useless mangled tenement of clay.

Dismiss her pleas'd, and say thou'rt innocent.

Alic. All hell contains not such a guilty wretch.

Ard. Then welcome death! tho' in the shape of
murder.

How have I doated to idolatry!

Vain, foolish wretch, and thoughtless of hereafter,
Nor hop'd, nor wish'd a heaven beyond her love.—

Now, unprepar'd, I perish by her hate.

Alic.

Alic. Tho' blacker, and more guilty than the fiends,

My soul is white from this accursed deed.

O *Arden*! hear me—

Ard. —Full of doubts I come,

O thou Supreme, to seek thy awful presence.

My soul is on the wing. I own thy justice.

Prevent me with thy mercy. [*Dist.*]

Alic. —Turn not from me :

Behold me, pity me, survey my sorrows.

I who despis'd the duty of a wife,

Will be thy slave.—Spit on me, spurn me, sir,

I'll love thee still.—O couldst thou court my scorn,

And now abhor me, when I love thee more,

If possible, than e'er thou lov'dst *Alicia*.

Mos. Mad' fool, he's dead, and hears thee not.

Alic. —'Tis false—

He smiles upon me, and applauds my vengeance.

[*Snatches a dagger, and strikes at Mosby. — A knocking at the gate.*]

Mos. Damnation!—

B. Will. 'Sdeath! we shall leave our work unfinished, and be betray'd at last.—Let's hide the body.

Mos. —Force her away.

Alic. Inhuman bloody villains!

[*She swoons, as she is forc'd from the body.*]

Enter Maria.

Mar. *Mosby* here!—

My sliding feet, as they move trembling forwards,

Are drench'd in blood. O may I only fancy

That *Arden* there lies murder'd—

Mos. —How fares *Alicia*?—

Alic. As the howling damn'd: and thou my hell—

Mar. Unhappy brother!

If thou hast done this deed, hope not to 'scape:

54 ARDEN or FEVERSHAM.

Mercy herself, who only seeks for crimes,
That she may pardon and reform the guilty,
Wou'd change her nature at a sight like this.

Enter Michael.

Mich. The guests are come—the servants all re-
turn'd.

Mosby Alicia, be thyself; and mask thy heart
[*Mosby lifts up Alicia.*

From ev'ry prying eye with courteous smiles.

Alic. Thou canst not think me mean enough to
live.

Mos. You wou'd not choose an ignominious
death?

Alic. That's all I dread—Might but the silent
grave,

When it receives me to its dark abode,

Hide, with my dust, my shame!—O might that be,

And *Arden's* death reveng'd.—'Tis my sole prayer.

If not, may awful justice have her course.

[*Exit Alicia.*

Mos. Sister! Our lives are thine—

Mar. Tho' *Mosby* has shook off humanity, I
can't be his accuser. [Exit Maria.

Mos. Follow them, *Green*, and watch *Alicia's*
conduct.

Gr. I will, but cannot answer for my own.

O *Arden!* *Arden!* cou'd we change conditions!

[*Exit Green.*

B. Will. Why, what a crew of cowards!

In the same moment murdering and repenting:

Mos. Give me the ring that is on *Arden's* finger.

Shake. There. Will you have his purse too?

Mos. No, keep that.

B. Will. Thanks for our own: we shou'd have
kept the ring,

Were it not too remarkable.

But how must we dispose of the body?

Mos.

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM. 55

Mos. Convey it thro' the garden, to the field
Behind the abbey-wall : *Michael* will shew the way.
The night is dark and cloudy—yet take heed—
The house is full of company.

B. Will. Sir, if you doubt our conduct, do't
yourself.

Mos. Nay, gentlemen—

Shake. Pretend to direct us !

Mos. For your own sakes—*Arden* will soon be
mist.

Shake. We know our business, sir.

Mos. I doubt it not.

There's your reward. The horses both are saddled,
And ready for your flight.

B. Will. Use them yourself :
I hope we're as safe as you.

Mos. Why, gentlemen—*Arden*, I us'd thee worse.
[*Aside.*

B. Will. We shall take care however for our
own sakes.

Mos. 'Tis very well—I hope we all are friends.
So—softly—softly—*Michael*, not that door—

[*Michael going out at the wrong door.*
So—make what speed you can : I'll wait you there.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *A hall in Arden's house.*

Mosby alone.

They must pass undescry'd : gardens and fields
Are dreary deserts now. Night-fowls and beasts of
prey

Avoid the pinching rigour of the season,
Nor leave their shelter at a time like this.

And yet this night, this ling'ring winter night,
Hung with a weight of clouds that stops her cour
Contracts new horrors, and a deeper black,
From this damn'd deed,—*Mosby*, thou hast thy wi
Ar.

56 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

Arden is dead ; now count thy gains at leisure.
 Dangers without, on every side suspicion ;
 Within, my starting conscience mark such wounds,
 As hell can equal, only murderers feel. [*A pause.*
 This, this the end of all my flatt'ring hopes !
 O ! happiest was I in my humble state :
 Tho' I lay down in want, I slept in peace :
 My daily toil begat my night's repose,
 My night's repose made day-light pleasing to me.
 But now I've climb'd the top-bough of the tree,
 And sought to build my nest among the clouds :
 The gentlest gales of summer shake my bed,
 And dreams of murder harrow up my soul.
 But hark !—Not yet :—'Tis dreadful being alone.
 This awful silence, that unbroken reigns
 Thro' earth and air, awakes attention more,
 Than thunder bursting from ten thousand clouds :
 S^d death !—'tis but *Michael*—Say—

Enter Michael.

Mich. Dead *Arden* lies
 Behind the abbey—'tis a dismal sight !
 It snow'd a pace while we dispos'd the body.

Maf. And not as you return'd ?

Mich. No, sir—

Maf. That's much—

Shou'd you be question'd as to *Arden's* death,
 You'll not confess ?

Mich. No, so *Maria's* mine.

Maf. She's thine, if all a brother can—

Mich. ———— What's if ?

I bought her dear, at hazard of my soul,
 And force shall make her mine.—

Maf. ———— Why, how now, coward ?

Enter Maria.

Mar. The guests refuse to take their seats with-
 out you.

Alicia's

Alicia's grief too borders on distraction.

Thy presence may appease—

Mos. Increase it rather.

Mar. Michael, your absence too has been observed.

Mos. Say we are coming. [Exit Maria.

Mich. One thing I'd forgot. [Returning.

Soon as the company have left the house,
The ruffians will return.

Mos. What wou'd the villains?

Mich. They mutter'd threats and curses,
And seem'd not satisfied with their reward.

[Exit Michael

Mos. Let them take all. Ambition, av'rice, lust,
That drove me on to murder, now forsake me.

O *Arden*! if thy discontented ghost
Still hovers here to see thy blood reveng'd,
View, view the anguish of this guilty breast;
And be appeas'd. [Exit.

SCENE III. A room in *Arden's* house.

A table spread for supper.

Green, *Bradshaw*, *Adam Fowl*, *Alicia*, *Maria*, &c.

Brad. Madam, be comforted.

A. Fowl. Some accident, or business unforeseen,
detains him thus.

Brad. I doubt not of his safety.

Alic. I thank you, gentlemen; I know you lov'd
My *Arden* well, and kindly speak your wishes.

Enter *Mosby*.

Mos. I am asham'd I've made you wait: be seated.

Gr. Madam, first take your place.

Alic. Make me not mad—

To me henceforth all places are alike. [Sits.

Mos. Come, since we want the master of the
house,

I'll take his seat for once.

Alic.

58 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

Alic. Dares he do this? [*Aside.*]

Mos. I'm much afflicted that he stays so late;
The times are perilous.

Gr. And he has enemies.

Tho' no man, sure, did e'er deserve them less.

Mos. This day he was assaulted in the street.

Gr. You sav'd him then.

Mos. Wou'd I were with him now!

Mar. She starts, her looks are wild. [*Aside.*]—
How fare you, madam?

Alic. I'm lost in admiration of your brother.

Mar. I fear her more than ever. [*Aside.*]—
Madam, be merry.

Mos. Michael, some wine. Health and long life
to Arden. [*Drinks.*]

Alic. The good you wish, and have procur'd for
Arden, [*Rising.*]

Light on thyself.

Mar. For heaven's sake!—

Alic. Give me way. [*Comes forward.*]

Let them dispatch, and send me to my husband:

[*All rise.*]

Eve liv'd too long, with falsehood and deceit.

[*Knocking at the gate.*]

A. Fowl. What noise is that? [*Exit Michael.*]

Brad. Pray heaven, that all be right.

Mos. Bar all the doors.

Enter Michael.

Mich. We are discover'd, sir. [*To Mosby.*]

The mayor with officers, and men in arms.

Enter Mayor, &c.

Mayor. Go you with these, and do as I directed.

[*Exeunt officers and others.*]

I'm sorry that the duty of my office

Demands a visit so unseasonable.

Mos. Your worship doubtless were a welcome
guest

At

At any hour; but wherefore thus attended?

Mayor. I have received a warrant from the council
To apprehend two most notorious ruffians;
And information being made on oath,
That they were seen to enter here to-night,
I'm come to search.

Gr. I'm glad it is no worse. [Aside.

Mos. And can you think that *Arden* entertains
Villains like those you speak of? Were he here,
You'd not be thank'd for this officiousness.

Mayor. I know my duty, sir, and that respect,
So justly due to our good neighbour's worth.—
But where is *Arden*?

Alic. Heavens! where indeed!

Mar. *Alicia*, for my sake— [Aside.

Alic. If I were silent,
Each precious drop of murder'd *Arden's* blood
Wou'd find a tongue, and cry to heaven for ven-
geance.

Mayor. What says the lady?

Mos. Oh! sir, heed her not:
Her husband has not been at home to-night,
And her misboding sorrow for his absence,
Has almost made her frantic.

Mayor. Scarcely an hour,
Since I beheld him enter here with you.

Mos. The darkness of the night deceiv'd you, sir:
It was a stranger, since departed hence.

Mayor. That's most surprising. No man knows
better.

Frank. [without] Within there—ho—bar up
your gates with care,
And set a watch—Let not a man go by—

Franklin and others enter with lights—
And ev'ry tongue, that gave not its consent

To

60 ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM.

To *Arden's* death, join mine and cry aloud
To heaven and earth for justice. Honest *Arden*,
My friend—is murder'd.

Mayor. Murder'd!

Gr. How?

Mos. By whom?

Frank. How shall I utter what my eyes have seen!
Horrid with many a gaping wound he lies
Behind the abbey, a sad spectacle!
O vengeance! vengeance!

Mayor. Justly art thou moved.

Passion is reason in a cause like this.

Frank. Eternal Providence, to whose bright eye
Darkness itself is as the noon-day blaze,
Who brings the midnight murd'rer and his deeds
To light and shame, has in their own security
Found these.

Mayor. Here seize them all—this instant;

[*Alicia faints.*

Look to the lady. This may be but feign'd.
Your charge but goes a long with my suspicions.

Brad. And mine.

A. Fowl. And mine.

Frank. First hear me, and then judge,
Whether on slight presumptions I accuse them.
These honest men, (neighbours and townsmen all)
Conducted me, dropping with grief and fear,
To where the body lay;—with them I took these
notes,

Not to be trusted to the faithless memory.

“ Huge clots of blood and some of *Arden's* hair

“ May still be seen upon the garden-wall;

“ Many such rushes as these floors are strew'd

“ with,

“ Stick to his shoes and garments: and the prints

“ Of

"Of several feet may in the snow be trac'd,
 "From the stark body to the very door."
 These are presumptions he was murder'd here,
 And that th'affassins having borne his corse
 Into the fields, hither return'd again.

Mos. Are these your proofs?

Gr. These are but circumstances,
 And only prove thy malice.

Frank. — And this scarf,
 Known to be *Arden's*, in the court was found,
 All blood. —

Mayor. — Search 'em. —

Mich. I thought I'd thrown it down the well.

[*Aside.*

Mayor. — [*To an officer*] Enter that room, and
 search the lady there;

We may perhaps discover more.

[*Officer goes out and re-enters, in the mean time another officer searches Mosby and Green.*]

1st Officer. On *Arden's* wife I found this letter.

2d Officer. And I this ring on *Mosby*.

Mayor. — — — Righteous heaven!

Well may'st thou hang thy head, detested villain;

This very day did *Arden* wear this ring,

I saw it on his hand. —

Mos. I freely yield me to my fate

Enter another officer.

Officer. We've seiz'd two men behind some stacks
 of wood.

Mayor. Well, bring 'em in. —

[*Black Will and Shakebag brought in.*

— They answer the description:

But let them wait 'till I have done with these.

Heavens! what a scene of villany is here!

[*Having read the letter.*

B. Will. Since we're sure to die, tho' I cou'd wish 'twere in better company, (for I hate that fawning rascal, *Mosby*,) I'll tell the truth for once. He has been long engaged in an affair with *Arden's* wife there, but fearing a discovery, and hoping to get into his estate, hired us to hide him.—That's all.

Mayor. And you the horrid deed perform'd?

Shake. We did, with his assistance, and *Green's* and *Michael's*.

Mayor. This letter proves *Alicia*, from the first, Was made acquainted with your black design.

B. Will. I know nothing of that: but if she was, she repented of it afterwards. So, I think, you call that a change of mind.

Mayor. That may avail her at the bar of heav'n, But is no plea at our's. [*Alicia brought in.*] Bear them to prison;

Load them with irons, make them feel their guilt,
And groan away their miserable hours,
Till sentence of the law shall call them forth
To publick execution.—

Alic. ———I adore

Th'unerring hand of justice; and with silence
Had yielded to my fate, but for this maid,
Who, as my soul dreads justice on her crimes,
Knew not, or e'er consented to this deed.

Mayor. But did she not consent to keep it secret?

Mos. To save a brother, and most wretched friend.—

Mayor. She has undone herself—Behold how innocence

May suffer in bad fellowship.—And *Bradshaw*,
My honest neighbour *Bradshaw* too—I read it
With grief and wonder.—

Brad. ———Madam, I appeal
To you; as you are shortly to appear

Before

ARDEN or FEVERSHAM. 63

Before a judge that sees our secret thoughts,
Say, had I knowledge, or——

Alic. You brought the letter,
But well I hope, you knew not the contents.

Mayor. Hence with them all, 'till time and farther light
Shall clear these mysteries.

A. Fowl. If I'm condemn'd,
My blood be on his head that gives the sentence,
I'm not accus'd, and only ask for justice.

Frank. You shall have justice all, and rig'rous justice.
So shall the growth of such enormous crimes,
By their dread fate be check'd in future times.
Of Avarice, *Mosby* a dread instance prove,
And poor *Alicia* of unlawful Love.



EPILOGUE,

By a FRIEND.

Spoken by the young Gentlewoman who
performed ALICIA.

4 AP 54

*AN ancient bard, vers'd in dramattick laws,
Has said, (and well he knew to gain his cause) }
"The seasoning of a play, is the applause*."
Within these walls, this truth no doubt will bear,
Without such seasoning, there's no 'biding here.—
First for our author: for his play, I mean;
(For he's beyond the reach of critick-spleen)
If he has touch'd your hearts, your tears will show it,
And your hands echo back, you acquit the poet.
Next, our performance; there, we've done our best:
And where ought's wanting, you'll supply the rest:
I know you will, you must; from hence I spy,
Good nature sparkling in each generous eye.
Last for my humble self,—thus low I sue; [curt'fying.
Do not too rigid give me all my due:
What's wanting, pardon: and if ought appears,
That may be ripen'd by theatrick-years:
Kindly protect the plant, your smiles now raise,
Be mine, obedient thanks; yours, all the praise.*

* Ben Jonson's Volpone.

